CLAIMS

I claim:

1. A vehicle maintenance apparatus, comprising:

a mat;

said mat configured for placement beneath a vehicle; and

means associated with said mat for receiving a material exuded by a vehicle system and identifying the vehicle system from which said material is exuded.

2. An apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said means comprises:

a stenciled region on said mat correlating to a vehicle system;

wherein said stenciled region defines an area for receiving and identifying a material exuded from said vehicle system.

3. An apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said material is selected from the group consisting essentially of fluids, drips, particulates and emissions from a vehicle system.

4. An apparatus as recited in claim 2, wherein said material is identifiable based on proximity of said material to said stenciled region for receiving and identifying a material.

5. An apparatus as recited in claim 4, wherein said material is further identifiable by color.

6. An apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said mat comprises a fluid-impervious material.

7. An apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said mat comprises a fluid-absorbent material.

8. An apparatus as recited in claim 1, further comprising means for guiding said vehicle to a predetermined position over said mat.

9. An apparatus as recited in claim 8, wherein said guiding means comprises a wheel bumper.

10. An apparatus as recited in claim 1, further comprising means for protecting said mat from harmful elements.

11. An apparatus as recited in claim 10, wherein said protecting means comprises a cover or other outermost layer.

12. An apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said mat is impregnated or coated with a reactive agent to assist in the identification of said material.

13. An apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said mat has a deformable planar surface on which a vehicle wheel can be positioned.

14. An apparatus as recited in claim 13, wherein said deformable planar surface is configured for identifying tire tread depth.

15. An apparatus as recited in claim 14, wherein positioning a vehicle tire on said deformable planar surface imprints said tire tread into said deformable planar surface.

16. A vehicle maintenance apparatus, comprising:

a mat;

said mat configured for placement beneath a vehicle;

said mat having a stenciled region correlating to a vehicle system;

wherein said stenciled region defines an area for receiving and identifying a material exuded from said vehicle system.

17. An apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein said material is selected from the group consisting essentially of fluids, drips, particulates and emissions from a vehicle system.

18. An apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein said material is identifiable based on proximity of said material to said stenciled region for receiving and identifying a material.

19. An apparatus as recited in claim 18, wherein said material is further identifiable by color.

20. An apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein said mat comprises a fluid-impervious material.

21. An apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein said mat comprises a fluid-absorbent material.

22. An apparatus as recited in claim 16, further comprising means for guiding said vehicle to a predetermined position over said mat.

23. An apparatus as recited in claim 22, wherein said guiding means comprises a wheel bumper.

24. An apparatus as recited in claim 16, further comprising means for protecting said mat from harmful elements.

25. An apparatus as recited in claim 24, wherein said protecting means comprises a cover or other outermost layer.

26. An apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein said mat is impregnated or coated with a reactive agent to assist in the identification of said material.

27. An apparatus as recited in claim 16, wherein said mat has a deformable planar surface on which a vehicle wheel can be positioned.

28. An apparatus as recited in claim 27, wherein said deformable planar surface is configured for identifying tire tread depth.

29. An apparatus as recited in claim 28, wherein positioning a vehicle tire on said deformable planar surface imprints said tire tread into said deformable planar surface.

30. A method for identifying a problem with a vehicle system, comprising:

providing a mat;

said mat having a stenciled region correlating to a vehicle system;

wherein said stenciled region defines an area for receiving a material exuded from said vehicle system;

positioning a vehicle over said mat; and

based on position of a material exuded from said vehicle in relation to said stenciled region, identifying the vehicle system from which said material was exuded.

31. A method as recited in claim 30, wherein said material is selected from the group consisting essentially of fluids, drips, particulates and emissions from a vehicle system.

32. A method as recited in claim 30, further comprising identifying said material based on color of said material.

33. A method as recited in claim 32, wherein said mat is impregnated or coated with a reactive agent to assist in the identification of said material based on color.

34. A method for monitoring tire tread wear, comprising:

providing a mat;

said mat having a deformable planar surface on which a vehicle wheel can be positioned;

wherein positioning a vehicle tire on said deformable planar surface imprints said tire tread into said deformable planar surface;

positioning a vehicle tire on said deformable planar surface;

removing said vehicle tire from said deformable planer surface; and

determining tread depth from said imprint.

35. A method for monitoring tire pressure, comprising:

providing a mat;

said mat having a deformable planar surface on which a vehicle wheel can be positioned;

wherein positioning a vehicle tire on said deformable planar surface imprints said tire tread into said deformable planar surface;

positioning a vehicle tire on said deformable planar surface;

removing said vehicle tire from said deformable planer surface; and

determining tire pressure from said imprint.